

# From the Upper Chamber



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## Report for Wednesday, January 31, 2007

The twelfth day of the 2007 legislative session was called to order by Lieutenant Governor **Casey Cagle**.

Senator **Don Thomas** of the 54<sup>th</sup> stated that the journal had been read and was found to be correct.

Senate Bills 84-88, Senate Resolutions 123-125 and House Bills 96 and 132 were read for the first time and assigned to committees. The clerk of the Secretary then read the reports of standing committees and second readers.

Following the morning roll call, the Secretary read SR 106, which commends Dr. **Michael Guido** and recognizes the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Guido Evangelistic Association.

Lt. Gov. **Cagle** recognized Sen. **Jack Hill** of the 4<sup>th</sup>, who took the rostrum to commend Dr. **Guido** for his achievements and introduce Dr. **Guido** to the Senate as the *Chaplain of the Day*.

Lt. Gov. **Cagle** then led the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Sen. **Ralph Hudgens** of the 47<sup>th</sup> took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to ask Senators to sign a resolution declaring February 6 as Ronald Reagan Day.

Majority Leader **Tommie Williams** of the 19<sup>th</sup> took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to recognize today as Dialysis Day at the State Capitol.

Sen. **Jeff Mullis** of the 53<sup>rd</sup> took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to recognize Tourism Day at the Capitol, and to pass along the ceremonial “tourism hat” to his successor as chairman of the Senate Economic Development Committee, Sen. **Chip Pearson** of the 51<sup>st</sup>.

The Secretary read SR 121, which commends the tourism industry in Georgia and establishes January 30, 2007, as a time to recognize the vital role that the travel and tourism industry plays in Georgia's economic prosperity. Sen. **Pearson** took the well again to speak to the resolution, stressing the importance of tourism in our state.

Sen. **John Douglas** of the 17<sup>th</sup> took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to welcome several U.S. soldiers, who were seated in the Senate gallery.

Sen. **Doug Stoner** of the 6<sup>th</sup> took the rostrum to introduce the *Doctor of the Day*, Dr. **Ephraim Bassey** of Atlanta.

Sen. **Michael Meyer von Bremen** of the 12<sup>th</sup> took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to ask Senators to sign on to a resolution commending the Capitol Police.

Sen. **Steve Thompson** of the 33<sup>rd</sup> took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to commend Lt. Gov. **Cagle** for leading the Senate in a bipartisan direction.

Sergeant-at-Arms **Lorenzo Wallace** escorted Senators **Valencia Seay** of the 34<sup>th</sup> and **Jim Whitehead, Sr.** of the 24<sup>th</sup> and their guests, Atlanta Falcon **D.J. Shockley** and his family.

The Secretary read SR 70, which commends and congratulates Atlanta Falcons quarterback **D.J. Shockley** for his accomplishments in football and academics at North Clayton High School and the University of Georgia.

SR 127-129 were read and adopted.

The Secretary read SB 10, which is known as the *Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Act*. The legislation would provide for scholarships for public school students with disabilities to attend eligible private schools.

The Secretary then read Amendments 1-4.

President Pro Tempore **Eric Johnson** of the 1<sup>st</sup> took the well to present the Committee Substitute to SB 10, emphasizing that the legislation will give parents more choice when enrolling a special needs child into an educational institution. He stated that the bill is modeled after legislation in the state of Florida, known as the *McKay Scholarship*.

Sen. **Johnson** also introduced Amendment 1, which changes language in the bill concerning Georgia code that applies to private schools. He yielded to questions from Sens. **Emanuel Jones** of the 10<sup>th</sup>, **Regina Thomas** of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, **Nan Orrock** of the 36<sup>th</sup>, **Vincent Fort** of the 39<sup>th</sup> and **David Adelman** of the 42<sup>nd</sup>.

Sen. **Seth Harp** of the 29<sup>th</sup> took the well to urge support of SB 10 because it provides the parents of special needs children with more opportunity for individual choice.

Sen. **Thompson** of the 33<sup>rd</sup> took the well to speak to SB 10, expressing some of his concerns about the legislation. He also introduced his Amendment 5.

The Secretary then read Amendment 5, which adds language to the bill that would limit the legislation to special needs students.

Majority Leader **Williams** took the well to urge support for SB 10, relaying a personal story to the Senate about his great niece **Ava**.

Sen. **Fort** took the well to speak against SB 10. He yielded to questions from Sens. **Orrock** and **Joseph Carter** of the 13<sup>th</sup>.

Sen. **Chip Rogers** of the 21<sup>st</sup> took the well in support of SB 10. He mentioned that the Scholarship program has been well received in the state of Florida. He yielded to questions from Sens. **Jones** and **Hudgens**.

Lt. Gov. **Cagle** then paused to announce breaking news that Delta Air Lines' creditors have officially rejected the US Airways hostile takeover bid.

Sen. **Don Thomas** of the 54<sup>th</sup> took the well to express his support of SB 10.

Sen. **Bill Heath** of the 31<sup>st</sup> took the well to also urge support of SB 10. He yielded to questions from Sen. **Orrock**.

The Secretary then read Amendment 6 by Sen. **Gail Davenport** of the 44<sup>th</sup>. The Amendment would alter language in the bill concerning participation in the program.

Sen. **Johnson** took the well to conclude his presentation of SB 10. He asked Senators to vote yes on the substitute to SB 10 and Amendment 1.

Sen. **Horacena Tate** of the 38<sup>th</sup> took the well to present Amendment 2, which would incorporate language concerning the amount of the scholarship. She yielded to questions from Sens. **Fort**, **Preston Smith** of the 52<sup>nd</sup> and **Kasim Reed** of the 35<sup>th</sup>.

Sen. **Thomas** of the 2<sup>nd</sup> took the well to present Amendment 3, which stipulates that students who enroll in the *Georgia Special Needs Scholarship* program would be provided with transportation to and from school. She yielded to questions from Sens. **Smith**, **Meyer von Bremen** and **Fort**.

Sen. **Jones** took the well to present Amendment 4, which changes language in the bill concerning the way local school systems are funded. He yielded to questions from Sen. **John Wiles** of the 37<sup>th</sup>, **Smith** and **Hudgens**.

Sen. **Thompson** of the 33<sup>rd</sup> took the well to present Amendment 5, which adds language to the bill that would limit the legislation to apply to special needs students only.

Sen. **Davenport** took the well to present Amendment 6, which would alter language in the bill concerning participation in the program.

The Secretary read Amendment 2a, which changes provisions in the previous Amendment 2.

Sen. **Johnson** took the well once again to close the debate on SB 10. He urged support of the Committee Substitute to SB 10 and Amendment 1, and he asked the Senate to reject Amendments 2, 2a, 3, 4, 5 and 6

Amendment 1 was adopted by a vote of 44 to 1.

Amendment 2a was lost by a vote of 20 to 32.

Sen. **Thomas** of the 2<sup>nd</sup> moved for a yeas and nays vote on Amendment 2.

Amendment 2 was lost by a vote of 21 to 33.

Sen. **Thomas** of the 2<sup>nd</sup> moved for a yeas and nays vote on Amendment 3.

Amendment 3 was lost by a vote of 21 to 33.

Sen. **Jones** moved for a yeas and nays vote on the remaining Amendments.

Amendment 4 was lost by a vote of 21 to 33.

Amendment 5 was lost by a vote of 20 to 33.

Amendment 6 was lost by a vote of 21 to 33.

The Committee Substitute to SB 10 was adopted as amended by a vote of 36 to 4.

SB 10 passed by substitute by a vote of 31 to 23.

Following the announcements, Majority Leader **Williams** moved that the Senate stand adjourned until 10:00 a.m., Thursday, February 1.

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